

The American Cancer Society Starts a Campaign

David Free*

Introduction

A Society volunteer for more than 10 years, David worked his way up through the volunteer ranks. Originally from Southern California, David majored in advertising and marketing at the University of Southern California. After moving to Hawaii 16 years ago, he became editor of the International Society of Islands.

David is Director of Production at Crossroads Press, publisher of Pacific Business News and the Hawaii Medical Journal. He has been with the company 13 years.

His review of the ACS in Hawaii follows.

*Norman Goldstein MD
Guest editor*

Volunteers in the American Cancer Society's Hawaii Pacific Division have chosen "Practice Safe Sun" as the theme for the May 1993 neighborhood educational campaign. The neighborhood campaign is an annual residential door-to-door fund-raising canvass with an educational message important to the people of Hawaii. This year many other agencies are joining the Society, making delivery of this message a community-wide program.

The American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society (ACS) is the largest volunteer health organization in the U.S. This year the Society is celebrating 80 years of service to the nation. Back in 1913, the word cancer was rarely spoken and only 1 cancer patient in 5 could hope to live. Now, the survival rate is about 50% percent!

The Society's goals have expanded over the years and now the mission is to eliminate cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives from cancer, and diminishing suffering from cancer through research, education and service.

The ACS national home is in Atlanta, Georgia. From there, the national volunteers oversee operations with the assistance of a national staff.

The Hawaii Pacific Division is one of 57 divisions nationwide, providing Society services to every state, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

In Hawaii, the ACS traces its beginnings to the late 1940s. Now, 40-plus years later, we have a roster of some 13,000 volunteers!

Local unit offices in each division provide the services for which the Society is so renowned. The Hawaii Pacific Division currently has 8 unit offices: There are 3 on Oahu, 2 on the Big Island and 1 each on Kauai, Maui and Guam. The American Samoa unit is reactivating and the Molokai branch opened an office this past year.

Service to the Community

Research, education, service and rehabilitation are the primary programs provided by the ACS. Since 1946, the Society has spent more than \$1.4 billion to find ways to prevent, detect and treat cancer. Researchers who are awarded ACS grants are among the best in the country. Twenty-five have won the Nobel Prize, 7 of them since 1986.

As a matter of policy, approximately 1/4 of ACS budgets (both at national and division levels) go to research. The Hawaii Pacific Division is very proud of the fact that nearly \$700,000 of research grants were funded for the University of Hawaii Cancer Research Center by the Society in the 1990s.

Educational efforts help the public in specific ways to lower the risk for cancer through quitting smoking, proper nutrition and limiting exposure to the sun. The ACS stresses the importance of tests for early detection of breast, colorectal, prostate and other cancers. The Society also provides up-to-date information and materials to health professionals.

Service and rehabilitation programs offer information, guidance and support for cancer patients and their families. "Angels on Wheels" is a subset that provides volunteers who drive patients to their appointments for treatment. Home care supplies and equipment are available. "Reach to Recovery," for women who have had breast cancer, is one of ACS's larger support groups.

In delivering the early detection message, cancer education programs are provided through clubs and organizations and in homes, schools and churches. We use a speaker's bureau, videos, brochures and person-to-person contact, such as the annual neighborhood educational campaign in May to disseminate these educational messages. The information reaches more people today than ever before through the news media.

As a volunteer organization, we are proud that our volunteer-to-staff ratio is among the highest in the country. In addition to providing most of the services, volunteers serve on boards of directors and standing committees at the national, division and local levels.

The Hawaii Pacific Division is especially proud that Reginald C.S. Ho MD of Straub Clinic & Hospital currently is the Society's national president.

Practice Safe Sun

With the help of many similar-minded groups throughout Hawaii, we envision the Practice Safe Sun program to evolve into an on-going program to educate all residents of Hawaii. "Every BODY can get skin cancer, regardless of skin color" is the "tag-line" for the campaign. It was chosen to try to convince Hawaii residents that fair-skinned people are not the only ones who get this most-common form of cancer.

American Cancer Society volunteers asked prominent Honolulu dermatologist Norman Goldstein to work with them on the Practice Safe Sun campaign. Dr. Goldstein has advocated this message for many years and has been a valuable resource as the Society developed various facets of the program.

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* President
American Cancer Society
Hawaii Pacific Division

MAHALO!

TO THE THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY VOLUNTEERS

VISITING NEIGHBORS THROUGHOUT HAWAII WITH THE MESSAGE:

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THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY SOCIETY STARTS A CAMPAIGN

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Nearly 10,000 American Cancer Society volunteers will be knocking on neighbors' doors statewide in early May. At each household they will leave a kit filled with informative and attention-getting materials to emphasize the Practice Safe Sun message. The kit includes a Practice Safe Sun brochure with prevention and self-examination tips, the ABCD danger signs of melanoma, and other facts. Similar informational pieces will be used by the Society in a companion mailing to homes not reached by the door-to-door volunteers. Also to be included in the kits is a sample of SPF 15 (or higher) sunscreen. And, of course, to appeal to the younger set (not to mention their parents), each kit will contain a milk-bottle cap with the Practice Safe Sun theme.

For several years, members of the Hawaii Dermatological Society have been providing free skin-cancer screenings during May, which is national Skin Cancer Awareness Month.

This year Liberty House department stores statewide will provide space for the screenings on May 12 in a joint promotional effort. Liberty House stores hosting screenings are: Ala Moana Center, Pearlridge Center, Downtown, Windward Mall, Kailua, Kahala Mall, Maui, Kona, Hilo and Kauai.

As planning progressed this past winter and spring, many other activities were being developed. More than a dozen organizations are working together to make an impact for health on the people of Hawaii.

Summary

Dr. Goldstein has summed it up for the Hawaii Medical Association: "Because of the decrease in the ozone layer and the marked increase of melanomas and skin cancers, as well as sun-related cataracts and other environmental problems, we are very pleased that the American Cancer Society has decided to choose skin cancers/melanomas to alert our population to the dangers of excessive UV exposures."

The volunteers of the American Cancer Society hope that idea is developed and molded into something big enough to significantly reduce the incidence of skin cancer in Hawaii.